

Abstract of the Disclosure

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A suture punch system that is capable of directly passing braided suture through tissue in a simple, one-step process. The system includes three principle components: a malleable needle capable of delivering the suture to the tissue, a handheld instrument for grasping tissue and controlling needle placement, and a force-supplying mechanism to
5 supply the force required for needle placement. Needle deformation begins at the tip of the instrument, which beneficially includes a curved segment. As the distal tip of the needle pierces the tissue, it continues its radial path through the tissue. When the proximal end of the needle exits from the instrument, the needle may be radial in shape and traverses an essentially radial path through the tissue. Non-radial linear or non-linear segments may
10 alternatively be used. In one embodiment, the tissue to be sutured is constrained by pressure applied through closure between an upper, moveable jaw at the distal portion of the instrument, which acts as a fixed jaw. The upper, movable jaw contains a shaped passageway that permits the needle to pass therethrough during use. Once the needle has passed entirely through the tissue it may be retrieved using the jaws of the punch or another
15 instrument. Different needle designs and separate instruments and sutures may be used.